

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
AND ZEV YAROSLAVSKY**

**April 27, 2010**

**Request to First 5 LA for Transition Funding for Black Infant Health Program**

The Black Infant Health Program, established in 1989 by the State of California to address the high rate of infant mortality among African American families, has proven to be an effective program. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's data shows that since 2000, the program has seen a 50% reduction in the number of low-birth weight babies born to clients and has successfully reduced infant mortality rates among program participants by 50%.

On August 18, 2009, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to request that First 5 LA Commission support Los Angeles County's Black Infant Health Program after it experienced devastating state budget cuts. In response, in September 2009, First 5 LA voted to enter into agreements with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the City of Long Beach Department of Public Health and City of Pasadena Department of Health for a total of \$1,161.986 to prevent interruption of these critical

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MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

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services. Last year's vote by First 5 LA Commission was not unprecedented as other county First 5 commissions have also supported their local Black Infant Health Programs. For example, the First 5 commission of Kern County granted its county's Black Infant Health Program three years of funding. Similar financial investments in the Black Infant Health Program have been made by the First 5 commissions of Solano, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and San Diego counties.

The current agreements are scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010, leaving the County's Department of Public Health no choice but to sharply reduce the countywide Black Infant Health Program to either one, or at best, two community service providers to provide services to families residing in limited geographic areas. However, the County may have an opportunity to maintain current level of services in the next fiscal year. On May 13, 2010, the First 5 LA Commission will consider a motion to provide another year of transition funding at the current level for the three Black Infant Health Programs in Los Angeles County that would coincide with extensions it granted for its Healthy Births Initiative grants.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Urge the First 5 LA Commission to favorably consider continued investment in the Black Infant Health Program and to instruct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to send a letter to each member of the First 5 LA Commission

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expressing the Board's support for continued First 5 LA funding at its current level;

2. Direct the Department of Public Health to use First 5 LA funds received as a match to draw down additional federal funds to support the effort; and
3. Direct the CEO's office to support legislative efforts to reinstate State General Funds for the program.

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